

STD IS SHORT FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE

STDs are infections spread from person to person, most often by sexual contact. Many kinds of sexual contact can spread STDs. Any intimate contact that involves the penis, vagina, mouth or anus can transmit disease.

You can be infected with an STD any number of times and can be infected with more than one STD at the same time. We do not become immune to any of these diseases, so we can get them again.

Some STDs, such as AIDS, syphilis and gonorrhea, are serious diseases, while others such as vaginitis and crabs are very annoying but not dangerous.

Many STDs, occur without any signs or symptoms. Therefore, if you are sexually active, see a health care provider regularly and get screened for STDs. And go to a doctor or clinic promptly if you have been exposed to an STD or even think you may have been exposed. Treating yourself won't work and it can be dangerous.

In Massachusetts, minors can be checked and treated for STDs at an STD clinic for free and without their parents' consent.

The tips below are not fool-proof, but will cut down your chances of getting an STD.

1. **Abstinence.** The decision not to be sexually active does not mean there is anything wrong with you. Many people choose to not have sex at some time in their life. This is the surest way to avoid exposure to STDs.
2. **You can limit your exposure to STDs by having sex with only one other person if they are only having sex with you.** You can get an STD even if you only have one partner, if your partner is having sex with other people.
3. **Use condoms or other barriers every time** there is a chance of body fluid being passed from one person to the other. Use condoms every time you

have intercourse and latex barriers for oral (mouth to genitals) sex. Condoms made of rubber (latex) have been proven to prevent disease. Some people cannot use latex because of allergies. If so, try polyurethane condoms, which are made for either men or women to wear. The kind of condom is marked on the package. If you use "sex toys," keep them clean.

4. **You may choose sexual behavior that is less likely to transmit disease** – like dry kissing, touching, hugging and massage. Any activity that allows germs to get inside your body is more likely to transmit disease. Germs live in body fluids such as semen, blood, vaginal fluid and fluids from STD sores, drips or discharges.
5. **Look at your partner's body** and, if you see any signs of STDs, don't have sex. STD signs include: openings in the skin that can be growths (bumps or flower-like patches of skin), sores (either dry, wet or scabby) or discharges (thick or thin fluid that comes out of the penis, vagina or anus).
6. **Limit alcohol and other drugs.** These things can make sex unsafe by causing you to take chances that you otherwise wouldn't take.
7. If you plan to be sexually active, **learn all you can about STDs and be prepared** with condoms, barriers and birth control.

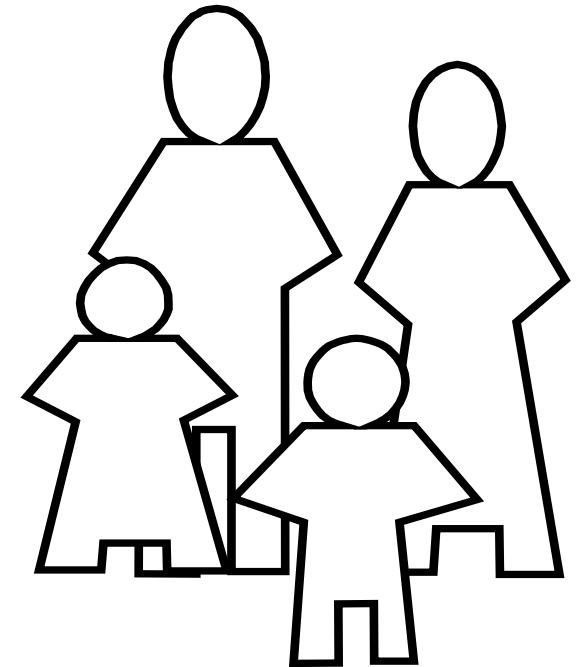
For the location and hours of the nearest STD Clinic, call 617-983-6940

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

INFORMATION

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ASSISTANCE



The Massachusetts Department of Public Health sponsors confidential exams and treatment at STD clinics throughout the state.

DISEASE (CAUSE)	HOW SPREAD	SYMPTOMS APPEAR	COMMON SYMPTOMS	TEST	COMPLICATIONS
CHLAMYDIA (bacteria)	Sexual contact	PID: unknown Other: 7-14 days	WOMEN: Often no symptoms MEN: Burning & penile discharge. May cause NGU (non-gonococcal urethritis)	WOMEN: Specimen from pelvic exam MEN: Urethral sample	WOMEN: PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease). Inflammation of tubes. May infect baby at birth causing eye infection and pneumonia. MEN: Inflammation of epididymis, testicles, & prostate.
GENITAL HERPES (virus)	Sexual contact with virus in blisters, with virus being shed without blisters	Usually 2-10 days (symptoms recur often)	Cluster of ulcerated painful blisters in the genital area. May have pain when peeing, swollen glands, discharge, fever, and body aches.	Visual and microscopic exam	May infect baby at birth. Person remains infected for life. Symptoms can occur often.
GENITAL WARTS (virus)	Sexual contact	A month or more	Wart-like growths, sometimes with itching and irritation.	Visual exam	Can block vaginal, penile and rectal openings. May infect baby at birth, blocking throat. May be linked with cancer.
GONORRHEA (bacteria)	Sexual contact	2-30 days (average 3-7 days)	Penile discharge (pus) with pain and burning on urination. Anal or vaginal gonorrhea may have discharge. Oral gonorrhea: may have sore throat.	MEN: Smear, culture, or both. WOMEN: Culture	Sterility, scarring of tubes. WOMEN: PID (see above) May infect baby at birth, causing blindness.
HEPATITIS B (virus)	Sexual contact - Sharing needles - May infect baby before or at birth	6 weeks – 6 months	Weakness, no appetite, fever, headache, muscle pain, dark urine, but symptoms may be too mild to notice.	Blood test	Some infected people become chronic carriers; can lead to chronic liver problems, cancer.
HIV/AIDS (virus)	Sexual contact - Sharing needles - May infect baby before or at birth	Blood test positive at 6 weeks to 6 months in most cases - AIDS: May take up to 10yrs. Or more to develop	Often no symptoms for years. Early symptoms: weight loss, sores in mouth, sore throat, swollen glands, night sweats	Blood test.	Pneumonia and other infections. Kaposi's sarcoma (tumors)
SYPHILIS (spirochete)	Sexual contact - May infect baby before birth	10-90 days (average 3 weeks)	Primary: Painless sore on or around penis, vagina, mouth, and anus. Secondary: non-itchy rash, flu-like symptoms, swollen glands.	Blood test	If untreated, brain damage, paralysis, heart disease in later years. Damage to skin, bones, eyes, teeth and liver to baby at birth.
VAGINITIS TRICHOMONA VAGINALIS (protozoa) CANDIDA (yeast) GARDNERELLA (bacteria)	Sexual contact - But can occur without sexual contact	4-28 days (varies with cause)	WOMEN: Frothy or cheesy discharge, itching, burning redness of vaginal area. MEN: usually no symptoms, may have rash, itching of skin, and burning with urination	Smear – Wet preps.	Skin irritation, secondary infections.
SCABIES & CRABS (mites & lice)	Sexual contact - Other intimate contact - Sometimes from bedding and clothing	2-4 weeks	Intense itching. Crabs & eggs attach to hair. Mites burrow under skin.	Visual exam	Skin infections from scratching.